

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

ACDA-07 /067 W

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R 111452Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2766

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5822

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SV, SU, US

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS STATE THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE SOVIET  
HELICOPTERS VIOLATE SVALBARD TREATY DEMILITARIZATION PROVISIONS

REFS: (A) OSLO 5578, (B) OSLO 5451, (C) OSLO 5449

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SUMMARY: TRIGGERED BY A PRESS ARTICLE ABOUT SOVIET  
HELICOPTER INSTALLATIONS ON SVALBARD NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS  
FROM MINISTER TO OFFICE DIRECTOR HAVE TRIPPED OVER THEMSELVES  
THIS WEEK TO EXPRESS AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHY THE SOVIETS HAVE  
INSTALLED HELICOPTERS ON SVALBARD AND TO POINT OUT THERE IS NO  
EVIDENCE THE AIRCRAFT VIOLATE SVALBARD TREATY DEMILITARIZATION  
CLAUSE. THEY ACKNOWLEDGE AS WELL, HOWEVER, THAT THE WAY IN  
WHICH SOVIETS EMPLOY THE AIRCRAFT UNDERMINES NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY.  
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THE SPATE OF COMMENTARY IS PROBABLY DESIGNED TO INDICATE TO

PUBLIC THAT GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON THOUGH THE SHORT TERM RESULT MAY HAVE BEEN TO BENEFIT THE SOVIET ARGUMENTS FOR USE OF THE HELICOPTERS. END SUMMARY

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1. NORWAY'S SENSATIONALIST PRESS HAS HAD A FIELD DAY THIS WEEK WITH REPORTS OF THE SOVIET HELICOPTERS AND THE HELICOPTER BASE BEING EXPANDED AT CAPE HEER SOME FOUR MILES FROM THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY OF BARENTSBERG ON SVALBARD. THE INDEPENDENT-LIBERAL OSLO DAILY "DAGBLADET" PUBLISHED A FRONT PAGE SPREAD AERIAL PHOTO OF THE SOVIET HELICOPTER INSTALLATIONS COMPLETE WITH A ROUGH INTERPRETATIVE ARTICLE SHOWING THE THREE STORY MAIN BUILDING, TOWER, POWER STATION, NEW HANGAR, TWO NEW ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS, ANTENNAES FOR RADIO NAVIGATION AND COMMUNICATIONS AND A NUMBER OF WHAT IT DESCRIBES AS A DOZEN MILITARY OR MILITARY-TYPE VEHICLES (TRUCKS, TANK TRUCKS AND HALF-TRACKS). THE NEWSPAPER NOTED THAT THE FACILITIES AT CAPE HEER WOULD PERMIT THE DOUBLING OF THE SOVIET HELICOPTER CAPACITY FROM FIVE TO 10-12 AND PROVIDE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR APPROXIMATELY 100 MEN.

2. IN A SEPARATE ARTICLE THE NEWSPAPER SAID GON AUTHORITIES COULD DO NOTHING ABOUT THE SOVIET HELICOPTER BUILD UP SO LONG AS IT MAINTAINED A CIVILIAN PRETENSE. IT SAID GON AUTHORITIES WERE ANNOYED WITH RECENT SOVIET CHARGES THAT NORWAY HAS VIOLATED THE DEMILITARIZING PROVISIONS OF THE SVALBARD TREATY (OSLO 5578). BUT WHILE THE GON MIGHT RETURN THE SOVIET CHARGES, THE RESULT WOULD ONLY BE TO HEIGHTEN TENSIONS ON SVALBARD. "DAGBLADET" NOTED THAT SOVIETS WERE JUSTIFIED IN THEIR CONCERN THAT DEMILITARIZATION WAS CARRIED OUT, BUT SAID NORWAY CANNOT PERMIT THIS TO UNDERMINE ITS SOVEREIGNTY. NO SOLUTIONS WERE SEEN DESPITE ONGOING PERIODIC TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THIS ISSUE.

3. THE ARTICLES COUPLED WITH FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES DREW RESPONSES WHICH CONFIRMED THE SOVIET RIGHT TO OPERATE THEIR HELICOPTERS, SERVED AS APOLOGIES FOR THE USSR VEALING ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS IN GON ADMINISTRATION OF SVALBARD VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS.

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4. SPURRED BY THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE HRK RADIO INTERVIEWED JUSTICE MINISTER VALLE WHO REPLIED TO QUESTIONS THAT NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES "DO NOT HAVE ANY BASIS FOR ASSUMING THAT THERE ARE MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AT CAPE HEER OR OTHER PLACES ON SVALBARD." SHE SAID THE SOVIETS GENERALLY HAVE MORE STAFF AT THEIR AIRPORTS THAN NORWEGIANS AND THAT THERE IS NOTHING SENSATIONAL IN SAYING THAT PURELY CIVILIAN INSTALLATIONS COULD HAVE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE.

5. THE JUSTICE MINISTER STATED THAT NORWEGIAN AVIATION AND CONSTRUCTION REGULATIONS APPLIED TO THE SOVIET ACTIVITIES AT CAPE HEER BUT THAT THE SOVIETS DISPUTED THEIR APPLICATION TO THEM, AND THE TWO SIDES WERE SEEKING TO SOLVE THE ISSUE.

6. SHE SAID NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE VISITED THE SOVIET HELICOPTER INSTALLATIONS AT CAPE HEER. SHE VISITED IN FEB, THE SVALBARD GOVERNOR VISITED IN JULY AND ON OCT 29, AND THE CIVIL AVIATION DIRECTORATE OFFICIALS INSPECTED IN EARLY AUG.

7. SVALBARD GOVERNOR ELDRING CONFIRMED THESE REMARKS TO OSLO LABOR PARTY JOURNAL "ARBEIDERBLADET" ON NOV 9. HE SAID HE HAD VISITED CAPE HEER PREVIOUS WEEK, WHICH, HE SAID, WAS NO MILITARY BASE. HE STATED SOME 70-80 SOVIETS WERE AT THE INSTALLATION WHICH WAS MODERN AND COSTLY. HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAVE NEITHER APPLIED, AS THEY SHOULD, FOR CONSTRUCTION NOR FOR FLIGHT AUTHORITY RIGHTS. HE ADDED IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR NORWEGIANS TO EVALUATE THE SOVIET NEED FOR THE FIVE HELICOPTERS.

8. ON NOV 10 JUSTICE MINISTRY INFORMATION SECRETARY TOR FUGLEVIK SUGGESTED NORWEGIANS PLANNED TO KEEP CLOSER EYE ON HELICOPTER REQUIREMENTS. HE INFORMED "DAGBLADET" THAT IN STUDYING FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF HELICOPTER TRANSPORTATION ON SVALBARD, NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES WOULD BE CONSIDERING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HELICOPTER CAPACITY AND LEGITIMATE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS. BUT HE VOLUNTEERED VIEW THAT HELICOPTERS WERE PARTICULARLY SUITED FOR TRANSPORTATION IN THE ARCTIC AND WERE A NATURAL MEANS OF MODERN TRANSPORTATION. AS SOVEREIGN POWER NORWAY DID NOT WISH TO PREVENT OR STOP SUCH DEVELOPMENT, THOUGH NORWAY WAS COMMITTED TO SEEING THAT THE DEVELOPMENT TOOK PLACE ALWAYS WITHIN THE SVALBARD TREATY FRAMEWORK.

9. AS IF THIS WAS NOT ENOUGH, A HIGH RANKING NORWEGIAN MILITARY  
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OFFICER REPORTEDLY INFORMED OSLO CONSERVATIVE "AFTENPOSTEN" NOV 8 THAT THE NORWEGIANS "ARE NOT SURPRISED THAT SOVIETS HAVE PLACED NEW HELICOPTERS ON SVALBARD BUT RATHER ARE SURPRISED THEY "WAITED SO LONG TO REPLACE THE OLD ONES."

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10. COMMENT: THE GON OFFICIAL COMMENTS REFLECT OFFICIAL SENSITIVITY TO SUGGESTIONS ON HELICOPTER ISSUE THAT THEY ARE NOT IMPLEMENTING TREATY OR DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON AT SVALBARD. THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE SENSITIVE TO SUCH SUGGESTIONS IN THIS DAWNING PRE-ELECTION ATMOSPHERE. THE STATEMENTS COULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR GON OR OTHER SVALBARD TREATY PARTIES, IF THEY SHOULD WISH LATER, TO EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT THE HELICOPTERS UNDER THE TREATY'S DEMILITARIZATION PROVISIONS.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TREATY VIOLATION, DMZ, CONTINENTAL SHELF, PRESS COMMENTS, SOVEREIGNTY, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, HELICOPTERS, VTO LANDING PADS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 NOV 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760421-0402  
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**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 OSLO 5578, 76 OSLO 5451, 76 OSLO 5449  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 16 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <16 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <19 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS STATE THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE SOVIET HELICOPTERS VIOLATE SVALBARD TREATY DEMILITARIZATION PROVISIONS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, SV, SU, US, UR, NO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006